

S.O. 26

● (1530)

In this case it is difficult to see that a genuine emergency of that nature is contemplated when it is a decision before a regularly constituted board. Although I ought not to forever rule that out it certainly would not on the face of it appear to be the proper application of the rule.

In addition, in this particular case, of course, this matter can scarcely be said to come upon the House as a surprise. In fact, the hon. member's seatmate raised the matter by way of question on October 12, in which the hon. member then asked whether on that particular day the Minister of Transport proposed to redirect any of the deliberations that were then before the Canadian Transport Commission about this matter.

Furthermore, I would have to take into account the fact that it is now not only a matter of weeks or months but in fact a matter of years that the Via Rail service was established with the intention of rationalizing into one service the existing two service transportation facility. Obviously that contemplated the cancellation of certain runs. That has taken place over not only one set of hearings but several sets of hearings.

The hon. member, of course, is not alone in expressing her displeasure at the actual decisions and cancellations at the hearings and at the discussions that have taken place, or at the absence of the hearings, as the hon. member's deskmate now reminds me again.

In any case, in case there were any doubt about this matter, I have looked at the precedents for guidance and happily have been able to refer to a decision of my predecessor who, in his usual distinguished way, dealt with a similar matter on June 22, 1970. At that time the reasons had to do with matters before the Canadian Radio and Television Commission. The hon. member for Matane at that time had filed a notice pursuant to Standing Order 26 requesting that a similar kind of unhappy decision or treatment before that board be taken into account under this rule. Mr. Speaker Lamoureux then said the following:

May I suggest to hon. members that the decisions taken by commissions while carrying out their normal functions should not constitute matters for urgent discussions. Even under the circumstances which seem to cause the hon. member some concern, it would seem to me difficult to justify the adjournment of our proceedings to allow interested members to express their views. I would point out to the House that if the CRTC decision was only made public recently, the problem itself has been discussed and commented, even in a controversial manner for several months, so that hon. members have had many occasions to express their views and present arguments for and against the project in question.

That reasoning seems to me to apply very directly to the present circumstances. I would therefore have to conclude that while there may be—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. While there may be many criticisms levelled, or concerns or many disagreements expressed, at the quality of the hearings or even in fact, as in this case, the complaint that there were insufficient or no hearings at all into this phase—this is, after all, a tertiary or at least secondary phase of a series of matters concerning rail

[Mr. Speaker.]

transportation since the inception of Via Rail service—it would hardly seem appropriate to intervene now on the question of an emergency with this rather secondary or tertiary phase, as was exactly the case in the previous ruling to which I have referred. Therefore, I do not think this is a proper matter for consideration under Standing Order 26.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. David Kilgour (Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council): I ask, Mr. Speaker, that all questions be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Shall the questions stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

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MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. David Kilgour (Parliamentary Secretary to President of Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all notices of motions for the production of papers be allowed to stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that they be allowed to stand?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) on a point of order.

Mr. Hal Herbert (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, I just heard the parliamentary secretary say there was to be no production of papers today. I should like to refer him specifically to two motions on which I thought at this first opportunity he would be most anxious to table the documents. The first is No. 3, which deals with the decentralization of the Department of Veterans Affairs to the province of Prince Edward Island. In view of the flip-flop of the government in changing its mind and deciding to follow through with the previous government's intention to decentralize to Prince Edward Island, I assumed automatically that the documents it must have in its possession to arrive at that conclusion would be tabled today. I suggest that since this is an important item for consideration, he should give consideration to tabling them next week at that opportunity.